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Children hold home-learning and wellness kits the National Center for Families Learning distributed during the pandemic in collaboration with local partners.

National Center for Families Learning

Literacy Organizations Recognized for Response to Uncertain Times

Three groups are receiving special awards to support their work during the pandemic.

BY DAWN STITZEL

Democracy depends on a literate populace. Our founders expressed this idea in various ways, and it permeates the Library's collections as well as its architecture. "A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives," reads the quotation by James Madison adorning the main entrance to the Madison Building.

Through its outreach programs, the Library seeks to nurture and expand this culture of literacy and reading. The Literacy Awards Program is one such effort. This year,

to address the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest, the program is allocating major resources to a unique awards category: the 2020 David M. Rubenstein Special Response Awards.

Rubenstein launched the literacy awards with the Library in 2013 to honor national and international nonprofit organizations doing exemplary, innovative and replicable work to advance literacy in their communities. Each year, the Library awards close to \$350,000 to deserving organizations.

But this year is different.

LITERACY AWARDS, CONTINUED ON 7

DONATED TIME

The following employees have satisfied eligibility requirements to receive leave donations from other staff members. Contact Lisa Davis at (202) 707-0033.

Shayerah Akhtar
Craig Andrews
Sharif Adenan
Lynette Brown
Eric Clark

Laurie Harris
Sharron Jones
Terri Harris-Wandix
Donna Williams

COVID-19 UPDATE

The Library's Health Services Division (HSD) continues to monitor Library staff members with symptoms, clinical diagnoses or positive test results for COVID-19. On Sept. 4, HSD announced that three employees reported symptoms associated with COVID-19 last week. Some employees reporting symptoms are not diagnosed to have COVID-19, but, out of caution, the Library is monitoring all reports of symptoms.

HSD is communicating with all staff members who become ill. In cases in which ill individuals were present in Library buildings, HSD is also notifying their close work contacts and cleaning and disinfecting the areas affected. The same process is followed when contractors in Library buildings become ill.

More information on the Library's pandemic response: <https://go.usa.gov/xdtV5> (intranet) or <https://go.usa.gov/xdtVQ> (public-facing staff web page)

MASKS NOT OPTIONAL IN LIBRARY BUILDINGS

As more staff are returning to work on-site in Library buildings, the Health Services Division wants to emphasize the importance of the Library's policy on wearing masks: <https://go.usa.gov/xGWss>. They are not optional when staff are in any Library building.

Staff must wear a barrier mask or cloth face covering (<https://go.usa.gov/xGWHq>) over both their noses and their mouths when they arrive at a Library building; when they are in common areas, such as bathrooms, hallways and elevators; and any other time they are not able to maintain at least six feet of distance from others, including outside Library buildings.

Questions? Contact the Health Services Division at hso@loc.gov or (202) 707-8035.

REMINDER ABOUT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

With election season underway, the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) encourages staff to review LCR 9-1780 (Political Activity), LCR 9-1730 (Outside Employment and Activities), and OGC's Political Activities FAQ (<https://go.usa.gov/xfScT>). Here's one Q&A:

May I display a political picture, sticker, badge or button while on Library premises or in my own premises while on telework?

Yes, but only if such items are not visible to the public, employees whom you supervise or congressional clients. Be mindful of your attire and background during Skype and WebEx meetings.

Questions? Contact ethics@loc.gov.

GAZETTE

LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

loc.gov/staff/gazette

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MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at loc.gov/staff/gazette.

GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

Library of Congress Gazette

Washington, DC 20540-1620

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Design and production: Ashley Jones, 7-9193, gaze@loc.gov
ISSN 1049-8184

Printed by the Printing Management Section

GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the Sept. 25 Gazette is Wednesday, Sept. 16.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

To promote events through the Library's online calendar (www.loc.gov/loc/events) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to calendar@loc.gov by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

Serial and Government Publications Division Gets New Chief

Deborah Thomas has been appointed chief of the Serial and Government Publications Division, the Library announced last week. She has served as acting chief of the division since December.

Over more than 20 years at the Library, Thomas has held numerous positions as an expert in the digital serials process. Through her specialized knowledge of newspapers, metadata, born-digital materials, collections accessibility and e-acquisitions, she has played a significant role in furthering the Library's efforts to develop a comprehensive management system to support the transition from a traditional print to a digital media environment.

Before being named acting chief, Thomas served as the Library's lead liaison for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) National Digital Newspaper Program, a partnership between the Library and the NEH to build a national digital resource for accessing newspaper bibliographical information and historical newspapers. Thomas oversaw the growth of the program to include 50 states and territories, visiting more than 30 states to conduct site visits with program participants. In addition, she led the division's digital conversion team, which is responsible for digitizing an average of 1.25 million pages of historical newspapers each year.



Abbie Grotke

Deborah Thomas

Thomas also contributed substantially to the Chronicling America project, through which digitized pages are made available. She provided expertise on the technical and programmatic management of the project and ensured that the database, which contains more than 16 million newspaper pages, is accessible online.

"Deb's success in helping establish the nationally renowned National Digital Newspaper Program and Chronicling America – one of the Library's signature digital programs – is experience that will help shape the division's approach to digital strategy, collections and access for years to come," Eugene Flanagan, director of General and International Collections, said.

"I am excited for the opportunity to lead the division in both

enhancing and extending the use of unparalleled print collections and to address the challenges of an increasing digital-only publishing world, meeting the needs and expectations of today's researchers," said Thomas.

She joined the Library in 1998 as a digital conversion specialist. In that capacity, she led the coordination and implementation of "Meeting of Frontiers," an international bilingual web archive of digital assets from Russian and Alaskan libraries and the Library of Congress.

Thomas has published numerous articles based on her professional experience with the Library, including "Voices and Viewpoints in Chronicling America: Uses of Historical News for Education and Outreach" and "Helping Students Read Between the Lines: Identifying Bias and Attitude in the Press Through Analysis of Newspaper Features Related to the Election of 1912."

Prior to her tenure with the Library, Thomas worked in web and database development. She began her career with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art.

Thomas holds a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and a certificate in publishing from Radcliffe College. ■

LISTENING-SESSION RECORDINGS AVAILABLE

The Human Capital Directorate (HCD) conducted two virtual listening tours in August for Library staff to share their day-to-day challenges while working remotely and creative solutions they have identified to maintain work-life balance during the pandemic. Such conversations are helping Library leaders to understand the experiences of staff during this time. Recordings of the sessions are available (<https://go.usa.gov/xGWsE>) to staff who have Library network access.

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Planning Underway for Public Access to Library Buildings

No date has been set yet for the beginning of phase three of the Library's plan to restore on-site operations. But an approach to resuming activities in this phase – including opening reading rooms and public spaces in the Library – is being developed. Driving all decisions are the health and safety of staff and Library patrons.

Earlier this year, the Library chartered two groups to support this planning. The Reading Rooms Committee was established to coordinate actions for a measured, incremental return to full reading-room operations. The committee's areas of focus include staff, researcher and patron access, use of space and equipment, standards for physical distance, ventilation, plexiglass shields, security and cleaning, including the availability of disposable keyboard and mouse covers.

The Public Access and Special Events Committee was established to develop plans to restore

public access and special events in a similarly incremental and measured way. The committee focused on developing a plan for the gradual return of visitors to Library buildings in the three parts of phase three. It aims to ensure a safe and well-organized visitor experience, including timed and ticketed public access, pathways for visitors to follow to maintain social distancing and clear communications about what visitors can expect when they visit.

Both committees were guided by prevailing health precautions related to COVID-19 and federal guidelines.

Starting in part one of phase three, the Library will provide full service in select reading rooms to as many researchers and registered readers as possible, subject to assembly limits and operating hours. During this time, Library buildings will be open for research purposes only and will not be open to the public. Phase three, part

one, operations will likely include restricted entrance protocols and other health safeguards based on local conditions.

The Library's plan for part two of phase three includes full restoration of all reading rooms and limited, ticketed public access. Tickets will continue to be required in phase three, part three, but the number of tickets available each day will increase.

Both committees include staff from Library Services, the Law Library, the Copyright Office, the Congressional Research Service, Integrated Support Services, Security and Emergency Preparedness and the Human Capital Directorate.

Roberto Salazar, acting chief operating officer for the Library Collections and Services Group, is chair of the Reading Rooms Committee. Shari Werb, director of the Center for Learning, Literacy and Engagement, is chair of the Public Access and Special Events Committee. ■

OIG WOULD LIKE TO KNOW

Report suspected illegal activities, waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in Library of Congress administration and operations to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). A link to all Library regulations is available on the staff intranet at <http://staff.loc.gov/sites/rules-and-regulations/>.

To make a report, contact OIG via the online form at www.loc.gov/about/office-of-the-inspector-general/contact-us/ or report anonymously by mail to 101 Independence Ave., S.E., LM 630, Washington, D.C., 20540-1060.

CITIZEN DJS MAKE HIP-HOP



Jaime Mears of the Office of the Chief Information Officer (row two, second from right), John Fenn of the American Folklife Center (row two, far right) and Library innovator-in-residence Brian Foo (row three, third from right) teamed up with Miami-based nonprofit PATH (Preserving, Archiving and Teaching Hip-Hop) on Aug. 26 for a virtual music-making workshop that delved into Foo's LC Labs' project, Citizen DJ (<https://go.usa.gov/xGjRD>).

American Folklife Center Launches New Podcast

Workers across the nation discuss their jobs and their lives in the series.

BY LEAH KNOBEL

The American Folklife Center (AFC) is bringing the voices of workers throughout the country to listeners with “America Works,” a new podcast series that celebrates the diversity and tenacity of the American workforce during a time of economic crisis and transition. The first three episodes were released on Sept. 3 to coincide with Labor Day.

Each 10-minute episode is based on a single oral history interview from the AFC’s ongoing Occupational Folklife Project, a multiyear initiative started a decade ago to document the culture of contemporary workers. The full interviews, which average 50 to 60 minutes, feature workers discussing formative experiences, on-the-job challenges and rewards, aspirations and occupational communities.

Given the economic challenges facing everyday Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic, the first-person narratives shared in “America Works” are a timely reminder of the spirit of the U.S. workforce.

“It is inspirational to hear these stories and to realize how many committed and optimistic fellow citizens are out there working to improve their communities, support their families and build a better future for us all,” said senior folklife specialist Nancy Groce, the podcast’s host.

Like the Library’s “American Lives” collection of interviews with workers recorded during the Great



California hairdresser Jeff Hafler shares his love for his profession in an episode of the new podcast series, “America Works.”

Depression, the new series highlights the experiences of working Americans whose voices are currently underrepresented in the Library’s holdings.

Since the start of the Occupational Folklife Project, AFC fieldworkers have compiled almost 1,000 interviews from across the country, documenting more than 100 professions. More than 400 of the interviews have been made available online, and researchers can access the entire collection in the AFC reading room when the Library is open to the public.

The first season of “America Works” reflects the occupational and regional diversity that characterizes the collection. Listeners can dive into the stories of individuals who provide some of the most essential services to our society, including Joyce Vegar of Coos County, Oregon, a home healthcare worker who explains the patience and compassion

required to provide a certain level of care for another. Chicago ironworker Sharon Sisson shares an unforgettable tale of how she won the respect of a chauvinistic male co-worker who was harassing her on a job site. Jeff Hafler of Wonder Valley, California, describes what he loves about his work as a hairstylist and beauty shop owner, why customers confide in their stylists and the pride he takes in working in the service industry.

“Having a vocation,” Hafler said, “is often a better guarantee of employment than a college degree.”

Episodes of “America Works” are being released weekly on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher and loc.gov/ podcasts – a fourth episode in the series came out yesterday. They are also being featured on the Library’s social media channels.

Listen here: <https://go.usa.gov/xGbAu> ■

**Your Employee Personal Page (EPP) is at
www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/**



Shahruckh Khan

Charlotte Giles

Charlotte Giles is a South Asia reference librarian in the Asian Division.

Tell us a little about your background.

I grew up in Houston, where I attended the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and the Houston Ballet Academy – in a previous life, I was training to be a ballet dancer. After high school, I moved to Massachusetts and went to school at Hampshire College. I am now a Ph.D. candidate in Asian studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

My other home base is Lucknow, India, where I studied Urdu with the American Institute of Indian Studies with wonderful teachers and ate a lot of great food. Before I came to the Library, I was in Lucknow on a Fulbright scholarship completing my dissertation fieldwork on women in the textile embroidery industry in northern India.

My dissertation focuses on the work of embroidery as an important part of the women's lives, one that causes an early breakdown of their bodies while also ensur-

ing the survival of their families. I explore issues such as how gender affects the women's mobility beyond their homes, how physical and emotional labor (arising from family care) are sources of pain for the women and how both types of labor are important factors to consider in researching and understanding the women's work as embroiderers – their emotional labor bleeds into their work and affects their bodies in complicated ways. I conducted my fieldwork and other research in Lucknow in Urdu.

What brought you to the Library, and what do you do?

My mother was a dance reference librarian with the Performing Arts Library, a former satellite facility of the Library that was located in the Kennedy Center. Her lifelong work as a librarian at the Kennedy Center/Library of Congress, the Houston Public Library and, now, the Johnson Space Center introduced me to librarianship as an alternative academic career path.

As a South Asia reference librarian, I work with my colleague Jonathan Loar to care for and curate the South Asia Collection and to provide reference services to researchers. We also work very closely with the Library's overseas field offices in Delhi and Islamabad.

How has the pandemic affected your work?

The pandemic has affected my work in a number of ways. Our division has continued to receive regular requests for research help through email and the Ask a Librarian service. Fulfilling requests without access to our collections during maximum telework was difficult. On the upside, we now have increased access through a small but awesome group of Asian Division technicians and librarians who have returned to work on-site.

My focus has been on producing reference materials such as a StoryMap and LibGuide to highlight our electronic and print collections.

Still, I miss being around all the

beautiful things at the Library and the experts who can tell me more about their work.

What are some of your standout projects so far?

Working with Jonathan, I have concentrated on bringing our areas of expertise to researchers beyond the D.C. area through efforts such as a webinar introducing the South Asia collections.

I have also appreciated working with specialists in other divisions who, like me, are interested in the use of textiles in library collections. The Asian Division was primed to host a display and panel event at the beginning of May with several other divisions focusing on textile-based items related to Asia across the Library. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, we had to cancel. But we have moved the panel online. On Oct. 15 at 2 p.m., speakers from the Main Reading Room, the Preservation Directorate and the Textile Museum at George Washington University will participate.

Before COVID-19, I also started two new web archiving collections, and I have contributed to a third started at the Islamabad field office.

What do you enjoy doing outside work?

These days, most of my time outside work is spent writing my dissertation, which is enjoyable in a sense. I am also an avid cook, baker and embroiderer (a hang-over from my fieldwork).

What is something your co-workers may not know about you?

I have a pet turtle, Shelly, who loves kale and strawberries. ■

BUILDING ACCESS

The C Street West doors are closed at the request of the U.S. Capitol Police to support its workforce during the pandemic. Staff should enter and exit Library buildings through the Independence Avenue doors or the Madison Building garage.

LITERACY AWARDS, CONTINUED FROM 1

With the sudden closures of schools and businesses because of the pandemic, literacy organizations have had to adjust quickly. Recognizing the importance of their efforts, the Library, in consultation with Rubenstein, repurposed \$150,000 in awards money this year to support three organizations whose work is having a direct, positive impact on communities affected by recent events.

“We worked with David Rubenstein, who wanted to find a way to recognize literacy organizations during these challenging times,” Kaffie Milikin, the Library’s development director, said.

Twenty-one previous recipients of major Literacy Awards from the Library were invited to compete this year for three special awards of \$50,000 each. A committee made up of award advisory board members reviewed the applications and made recommendations to Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden. She announced her three selections on Sept. 10. They are the National Center for Families Learning, Pratham Books and Room to Read.

“We are so pleased to recognize the outstanding efforts of these organizations,” Hayden said. “All three winners of the 2020 David M. Rubenstein Special Response Awards have found multiple ways to continue their missions while adapting to the evolving circumstances and needs of the communities they serve.”

Founded in 1989, the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) provides programming, professional development and resources to help eliminate poverty through multigenerational learning. NCFL serves 150 communities in 39 states and Washington, D.C. It received the American Prize from the Literacy Awards program in 2017.

During the pandemic, NCFL has focused on the digital divide – the gulf between those who have access to computers and the internet and those who don’t – by

partnering with school districts and other community-based organizations to provide technology and Wi-Fi access, including mobile bus hotspots. The organization has also addressed issues such as food insecurity and social isolation.

In Kentucky, Texas and Colorado, NCFL packaged and delivered food bundles with backpacks full of engaging educational books and materials to families. In Louisville, Kentucky, NCFL’s hometown, it partnered with a local nonprofit to produce public service announcements about COVID-19 that feature families as trusted community messengers. It also condemned the fatal shootings in the city this year of Breonna Taylor and David McAtee, and it is taking steps to use its platforms for social justice.

Established in 2004, Pratham Books is a children’s book publisher based in Bangaluru, India, that has helped millions of children gain access to engaging, affordable books in multiple languages. Pratham Books received the 2017 International Prize.

To further its mission, Pratham Books launched StoryWeaver, an online, digital repository of multilingual children’s stories that are openly licensed, giving users free access to them. The platform also enables the creation, translation, downloading and printing of stories through embedded tools. The repository has over 23,000 stories in 259 languages and continues to grow.

As demand surged during the pandemic for digital learning resources, Pratham Books created programs that can be used in low-resource environments, including a Learn at Home program, thematic reading lists, audiovisual books and a phone-based dial-a-story program that allows a child to locate a story in a chosen language by dialing a toll-free number.

In addition, StoryWeaver translated 3,000 books in 28 new languages, including books about the coronavirus, health and hygiene and social and emotional issues.

UNESCO and the World Bank have listed StoryWeaver as a resource for the homebound child during the pandemic.

Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of children in low-income communities by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education. Its Literacy in Primary School initiative helps children become independent readers through community engagement, provision of quality books and teaching tools and advocacy beyond the classroom. The Girls’ Education in Secondary School Initiative supports girls in building skills to succeed academically and make key life decisions through mentorship and other means. To date, Room to Read has worked in 16 countries and benefited 20 million children. Room to Read received the David M. Rubenstein Prize in 2014.

During the pandemic, Room to Read’s digital platform – Literacy Cloud (<https://literacycloud.org>) – originally developed for educators and book creators in Indonesia, was expanded exponentially. It now includes over 1,000 original Room to Read children’s book titles in 19 languages. The titles are available as a free resource for students, parents and teachers in the U.S. and around the world.

Simultaneously, the organization is working to harness the power of education to end systemic inequality and to build a more inclusive view of the human experience. Room to Read’s 1,600 culturally diverse book titles teach children about how to relate to others with empathy, tolerance and justice.

“As COVID-19 and recent social unrest continue to divide us, NCFL, Pratham Books and Room to Read have found multiple ways to connect to their audiences and adapt to the evolving circumstances and needs of the communities they serve,” Milikin said.

A Literacy Awards Program Interactive map and additional information on the awards and previous winners is available at read.gov/literacyawards. ■